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65-7625

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: CIA's Foreign Language Program

1. This memorandum submits recommendations for your approval; such recommendations are contained in paragraph 4.
2. Pursuant to your recent request for recommendations to strengthen the Agency's foreign language program, a small Working Group comprised of a senior member from each Directorate was formed to survey our present program and to develop such recommendations.
3. No estimate of funds and personnel required for increased emphasis on foreign language training can be developed until an inventory of existing foreign language skills and foreign language training requirements are developed.
4. The report of the Working Group is attached. It contains six recommendations with which I concur and which are submitted for your approval.

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[REDACTED]
R. L. Balmberman
Deputy Director
for Support

Attachment:

Report of Working Group on CIA's
Foreign Language Program

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GROUP 1
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TAB

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REPORT OF WORKING GROUP
ON
CIA's FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM

MISSION

In response to an initiative from the DDCI, a Working Group was formed by the Deputy Director for Support to examine the Agency's foreign language program and develop recommendations to strengthen it. Under its terms of reference, the Group was asked specifically to:

- a. Examine the status of current and projected language requirements in the Agency.
- b. Review the present system for maintaining the CIA Language Inventory and for testing the skills recorded there.
- c. Recommend changes in the policy base of the Agency's language development program to meet future needs.

The DD/S supplied the Chairman for the Working Group which included a representative from each Deputy Directorate and advisors from the Offices of Personnel and Training. (See TAB A for list of members.)

METHOD OF APPROACH

In conducting its review, the Working Group devoted primary attention to: present Agency policies [REDACTED] on language development; evidence as to the effectiveness of these policies; records and other indications of language

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requirements developed by the Deputy Directorates; probable trends in language requirements; the status of the Language Skills Inventory maintained by the Office of Personnel; the Agency's language proficiency testing program; proposals for increasing the language competence of the Agency; and other proposals for improving CIA's language program.

At the outset of its deliberations the Group obtained a comprehensive presentation on the Agency's language program from the Chief of OTR's Language School. A briefing by the Acting Dean of the State Department's Foreign Language School was also obtained in connection with the Group's examination of the policies and objectives of language programs in State, USIA, AID, and the Department of Defense.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

As others before, notably the Inspector General in his 1960 survey of the CIA Training Program, the Working Group found a widespread lack of essential discipline in the Agency's management of its foreign language program. This lack of discipline stems in large part, we believe, from two prominent defects in CIA's present language policies as they appear in [REDACTED] and related 25X1A instructions: first, the obvious lack of specificity which blurs the intent of policies and side-steps the detailed guidelines so necessary for their effective administration; second, the failure to provide adequately for centralized monitoring and staff supervision of the Agency's conduct of its language program.

It was concluded that if substantial progress is to be made in improving the Agency's language competence these two defects in policy must be dealt with. Consequently, the main efforts of the Group have been applied in that direction.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

Realistic and meaningful language requirements are the foundation stone of any foreign language program. They are the starting point in the

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development of hiring policies, training programs, assignment practices, and other measures necessary to satisfy an organization's language needs. [REDACTED] recognizes this basic fact as well as the wisdom of allowing each Deputy Director the latitude of establishing his own language requirements to meet his particular needs. But the regulation errs, we believe, in avoiding any statement as to how often such requirements should be surveyed and in failing to provide for the staff review of requirements at a central point where they can be related to other elements of the Agency's language program. As a consequence, the DD/S&T has yet to make a detailed survey of his language requirements, the DD/I and DD/S have done so only once--in 1960, and the DD/P's most recent survey was completed in 1962.

RECOMMENDATION #1

It is recommended that:

(a) Each Deputy Director prepare by 1 July 1966 a current statement of his foreign language requirements showing the positions, or proportion of positions, in each component which require language competence on the part of incumbents, together with the specific languages and proficiency levels involved. These statements of requirements for language competence in place will provide useful background for assignment consideration and the basis for developing language training requirements.

(b) Deputy Directors thereafter update their language requirements at least annually.

(c) Each Directorate furnish a consolidated statement of its current language requirements to the Director of Training in a suitable format developed with him for this purpose.

TESTING AND RECORDS

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[REDACTED] provides that "staff personnel who claim any degree of knowledge of a foreign language are required to have their proficiency evaluated through Agency tests." However, no time limit is set within which such tests must be taken or retaken and no one is charged with responsibility for seeing that it gets done, except the Director of Personnel in the case of new employees entering on duty. Perhaps it should not be too surprising, therefore, that as of 31 December 1964, according to the Office of Personnel, only 34 per cent of the

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skills recorded in CIA's Foreign Language Inventory had been tested, and at least two-thirds of the proficiency records--self-appraised as well as tested--had been filed prior to 1962. A vigorous overhaul of the Agency's testing program and Foreign Language Inventory are clearly in order.

RECOMMENDATION #2

It is recommended that:

(a) Career Service Heads be made responsible for assuring that employees under their jurisdiction whose foreign language proficiencies should be a matter of Agency record undergo appropriate tests as required by Agency policies.

(b) New staff employees entering on duty with the Agency who claim foreign language skills be required to have such skills tested as a part of EOD processing, such testing to be accomplished within two weeks after their entrance on duty.

(c) All other staff employees serving in the Headquarters area who claim language proficiencies that have not yet been tested be required to complete such tests by 31 December 1966. Priority in test scheduling should be given employees claiming spoken proficiencies.

(d) Staff employees returning to Headquarters from overseas [REDACTED] stations who have untested language proficiencies shall be scheduled for testing as a part of their in-processing, such testing to be accomplished within two weeks after their return to Headquarters for duty.

(e) To keep the Agency's Foreign Language Inventory up to date, a policy be approved requiring that after 31 December 1966 staff employees with tested language proficiencies below the native level be retested approximately every three years.

(f) To simplify language records and testing activities, only speaking, reading, and understanding skills be tested or recorded, subject to the proviso that the capacity to test writing and pronunciation be maintained to meet specific requests for such information.

GENERAL POLICY ISSUES

Goals and Objectives

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██████████ states that "the purpose of the Language Development Program is to develop skills in foreign languages required to discharge the mission and functions of the Agency." To translate this broad objective into meaningful actions, we believe more specific goals should be identified. Three are proposed at this time: the first attempts to relate personnel assignments to language requirements; the second to provide a minimum language goal for professional employees in "foreign service" career fields; and the third to improve the Agency's language posture at overseas posts.

RECOMMENDATION #3

It is recommended that:

- (a) After 31 December 1970, personnel assigned to positions for which specified language requirements have been established, or to organizational elements in which a proportion of positions have been designated as language-essential, will be expected to possess the requisite language competence for such assignments unless an exception is mutually agreed upon on an individual basis by the responsible Operating Official and Career Service Head.
- (b) By 31 December 1970, professional employees serving in career fields or employment categories designated by the responsible Deputy Director as requiring language competence will, unless individually excepted, be expected to possess a fully useful proficiency (i.e., "Intermediate" or higher) in at least one foreign language.
- (c) Effective immediately, every professional employee assigned abroad will be expected to possess at the time he arrives at his overseas post, or to acquire in his first six months there, at least a "courtesy" level of proficiency (i.e., "Slight" or higher) in the official language of his post or in a commonly used alternate language. In addition, non-professional employees, and wives of employees serving abroad should be encouraged to acquire such "courtesy" levels of proficiency and should be provided training for this purpose at Agency expense.

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Career Trainees

In the belief that the Agency's primary effort to improve its language competence should be directed at its junior officers, the Working Group has proposed a special language policy for Career Trainees. And in this instance, permissive phrasing and expressions in terms of goals are dropped in favor of stating the policy as a requirement.

RECOMMENDATION #4

It is recommended that:

Every Career Trainee whose planned assignment is to a career field requiring periodic duty abroad shall possess at least an "Elementary" proficiency in one foreign language before being transferred to his Career Service and shall possess at least an "Intermediate" proficiency in a foreign language before completing his third year of service in the Agency.

Incentives

The Group considered the need to provide appropriate language incentives for at least two categories of Agency employees: (1) those who in the future bring to the Agency at the time of their appointment a useful foreign language skill and who are expected to serve in language-essential positions, or in career fields requiring periodic service abroad; and (2) those who undertake the study of specified esoteric or "hard" languages in the expectation of accepting assignments involving these languages.

It was proposed that some form of salary increase should be used for language incentives and that such increases should be available only to employees in grades GS-11 and below serving in positions other than as translators, [REDACTED] or language instructors. However, the Group was unable to reach full agreement with respect to these proposals and to develop appropriate ground rules for their administration.

RECOMMENDATION #5

It is recommended that:

The CIA Committee for Language Development be instructed to propose a language incentive program within the guidelines provided above.

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IMPLEMENTATION

As indicated in its summary of findings, the Working Group believes that present Agency policies fail to provide adequate centralized monitoring and staff supervision for the CIA language program. Without these, separate elements of the language program cannot be properly interrelated, over-all planning is difficult if not impossible, certain types of centralized reporting are hard to obtain, and essential discipline is often lost.

The Working Group concludes that the Director of Training should be responsible for such staff supervision and that the Committee for Language Development should expand its functions to assist him in carrying out this responsibility. Two other conclusions were noted with respect to the Committee: (1) since part of its job is to review the activities of the CIA Language School, it should be chaired by the Director of Training or his Deputy rather than by the Chief of the Language School, and (2) as a part of its function, the Committee should maintain a current classification of all overseas posts in terms of their primary, alternate, and secondary languages to aid Directorates in establishing language requirements.

Finally, the Group observed the need of the Director of Training to receive adequate forecasts of language training requirements, preferably on a fiscal year basis, so he can efficiently plan for and manage the Agency's language training activities.

RECOMMENDATION #6

It is recommended that:

(a) Subparagraph b(4) of [REDACTED] be clarified to assign responsibility to the Director of Training for staff supervision of the Agency's Language Development Program.

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(b) The Director of Training or his Deputy serve as Chairman of the CIA Committee for Language Development.

(c) Deputy Directors supply annual forecasts of language training requirements to the Director of Training in a format developed with him for this purpose.

(d) The Director of Training revise [REDACTED] and undertake such other staff actions as may be required to carry out the recommendations in this report which receive final approval.

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10 JAN 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: DD/P Concurrence in CIA Working Group
Paper, "CIA's Foreign Language Program"

1. In concurring with the attached findings of the CIA Working Group Paper, "CIA's Foreign Language Program", I wish to point out that the Clandestine Services position vis-a-vis Incentives does not favor payment for language proficiency per se either in hiring an individual or in rewarding those who must take the so-called hard languages for operational reasons.

2. I believe it is enough to say that language competence may be considered in establishing the grade level at which individuals are accepted into CIA, and that language competence will be an important factor in the career advancement of the CT and of all individuals where language proficiency is essential to job performance.

(Signed) Desmond FitzGerald

Desmond FitzGerald
Deputy Director for Plans

Attachment

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